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ABSTRACT

This report explores current thinking in professional development as it relates to strategies for reform. It begins with a discussion of the relationship between professional development and school reform and a description of recent efforts by the National Governors' Association to stimulate dialogue on the issue. The report then discusses the problems of current professional development approaches and reviews the major issues and challenges involved in designing a new system, including summaries of three state-designed models for improving the quality and effectiveness of professional development, crafted by working groups in Colorado, Michigan, and Rhode Island. Highlights include: (1) draft criteria for effective professional development proposed by the Colorado team; (2) analyses and critiques of current professional development programs in five Colorado school districts; (3) a 5-year action plan proposed by the Rhode Island team that includes the establishment of professional standards and assessments for educators; and (4) ideas from the Michigan team for a new professional development infrastructure featuring advanced telecommunications networks and innovation/demonstration sites. The report proposes 12 guiding principles for a new approach to professional development and identifies topics for further discussion. While the immediate aim of these efforts is to increase public attention on this issue, the ultimate goal is to design new systems of professional development that will help realize the vision of educational excellence embraced by the Governors. The appendix provides a list of names and addresses of participants in the NGA working meeting on professional development. (ND)

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ED 386 435

NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Professional Development for Educators

New State Priorities and Models

CAPACITY for change

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NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Education
Policy Studies
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Center for
Policy Research

Professional Development for Educators:

New State Priorities and Models

by Mary Houghton and Paul Goren

Since their initial meeting in 1908 to discuss interstate water problems, the Governors have worked through the National Governors' Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the Governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The members of the National Governors' Association are the Governors of the fifty states, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The association has a nine-member Executive Committee, a Task Force on State Management, and three standing committees—on Economic Development and Commerce, Human Resources, and Natural Resources. Through NGA's committees, the Governors examine and develop policy and address key state and national issues. Special task forces often are created to focus gubernatorial attention on federal legislation or on state-level issues.

The association works closely with the administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues through its offices in the Hall of the States in Washington, D.C. The association serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states and provides technical assistance and consultant services to Governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Policy Research is the research and development arm of NGA. The center is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including agriculture and rural development, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, information management, social services, trade, training and employment, and transportation. The priorities for the association's research are set by the Governors.

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Executive Summary

The Governors' adoption of the National Education Goals in 1990, as well as congressional enactment of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, lends a new vigor and momentum to state and local efforts to reform education. Recent initiatives have focused on redesigning curricula, establishing ambitious standards for student performance, and devising innovative techniques for assessing students' learning based on the new education priorities. Although specific reforms vary from state to state, they all spring from the conviction that every student can and must meet higher goals for academic achievement.

These sweeping changes are placing new demands on educators. From prekindergarten through grade twelve, teachers are being challenged to master complex subject matter, adopt different teaching methods, and perfect new assessment techniques. Administrators, whose job it is to support and implement reforms within the schools, are also facing many new hurdles. To an unprecedented degree, teachers and administrators are being asked to fundamentally alter their daily practices and to do so quickly. Like their students, educators are being challenged to think, reason, and perform at higher levels.

There is an urgent need for professional development programs geared toward helping educators adjust to the new demands. Despite current large investments in the area of professional development, experts agree that most existing programs and activities are out of sync with the new education goals set by the Governors and Congress. If reforms now being enacted at the state and local levels are to succeed, educators must have access to high-quality, tightly focused training programs that will help them master the specific knowledge, skills, and practices they are being asked to bring to the classroom. Professional development must cease to be an afterthought to systemic reform and instead become a central component of state and local education reform efforts.

Governors and state education officials can help by spotlighting the need for effective, relevant, reform-oriented professional development programs for educators. Mobilizing the energies, talents, and experience of a diverse group of individuals, Governors can launch high-level efforts to rethink traditional approaches and create new paradigms. They can articulate to a sometimes skeptical public why professional development is important—indeed crucial—to educational excellence. Moreover, they can mobilize the resources of state government to provide local school districts with the policy framework, technical assistance, and financial support that will result in real changes in school buildings and classrooms.

This report will give the reader an in-depth understanding of the current thinking on professional development as it relates to strategies for reform. It begins with a discussion of the relationship between professional development and school reform and a description of recent efforts by the National Governors' Association to stimulate dialogue on the issue. Next, the report discusses the problems of current professional development approaches and reviews the major issues and challenges involved in designing a new system.

Central to the report are summaries of three state-designed models for reforming professional development. Crafted by working groups in Colorado, Michigan, and Rhode Island, the models contain many exciting ideas for improving the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs. Highlights include:

- draft criteria for effective professional development proposed by the Colorado team;
- analyses and critiques of current professional development programs in five Colorado school districts;
- a five-year action plan proposed by the Rhode Island team that includes the establishment of professional standards and assessments for educators; and
- ideas from the Michigan team for a new professional development infrastructure featuring advanced telecommunications networks and innovation/demonstration sites.

The report proposes guiding principles for a new approach to professional development and identifies topics for further discussion. The immediate task is to rivet people's attention on the issue and to ratchet up the level of dialogue in every state. The ultimate goal is to design new systems of professional development that will help realize the vision of educational excellence embraced by the Governors.

1 Introduction

More than five years ago, America's commitment to building a world-class education system crystallized around a set of six National Education Goals. The goals call for higher graduation rates, universal adult literacy, and increased student competency in all basic subjects. The bipartisan endorsement of the goals by the Governors in 1990 lends passion and momentum to state efforts to reform schools through the enactment of challenging new curriculum, assessment, and performance standards for students.

As states and local districts nationwide are focusing their efforts on raising expectations for all students and schools, consensus is emerging on the importance of professional development for educators. States are working on aligning curriculum, instruction, testing and assessment, school governance and accountability, and social supports for students in order to reach high performance levels for all students. As this occurs, a significant effort will have to be made to help educators master new subject matter and assessment techniques, hone their teaching and counseling skills, and stay abreast of research in their areas of specialty. Alongside efforts to improve student performance, professional development for educators must be a priority.

To be sure, states, school districts, and educators already invest in professional development. Yet there is a growing realization that many of the current professional development activities have little relevance at a time when academic goals and school structures are undergoing profound changes. Too often traditional professional development activities—in the form of one-shot workshops delivered by outside experts—are of little or no use in preparing educators and administrators to respond to new expectations and imperatives.

Even with general agreement that professional development programs must be redesigned, the question remains: What kind of systems should take their place? The hard work of defining new approaches—and thinking through their ramifications for state budgets, state education agencies, school schedules, teachers, administrators, parents, and students—is only just beginning.

National Governors' Association Efforts to Support Professional Development

In the hope of advancing the dialogue, in November 1993 the National Governors' Association (NGA) invited states to apply for small grants to develop new models of professional development. The state efforts were to focus on professional development as a component of education reform, with "professional development" meaning any of a broad range of activities intended to enlarge the skills and knowledge of teachers, administrators, and school staff. Although professional development can take place in a range of contexts, from teacher training activities and in-service opportunities to certification and recertification programs, NGA asked the states to focus specifically on in-service professional development.

Three states—Colorado, Michigan, and Rhode Island—were awarded grants in January 1994. Their work proceeded under a tight deadline. By May 31, 1994, policy teams were required to:

- establish a state working group on professional development, with representation from a broad array of groups concerned with education;
- identify existing professional development activities in their state;
- conduct an analysis of the policy and cost implications of implementing new models of professional development;
- design new models for in-service professional development, including ways that schools, districts, and state departments of education might be reoriented to accommodate these new models; and
- submit a strategic action plan for implementing new professional development models, including recommendations for gubernatorial action.

In addition, NGA sponsored a national meeting May 9-10, 1994, in Washington, D.C., to discuss policies, issues, and politics relating to professional development and to consider the next steps needed. With the theme of "New Models for Professional Development: Creating State Action Plans," the meeting brought together more than thirty participants, including representatives from each of the three grant states. (See the appendix for a list of meeting attendees.) Funding for these efforts was provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

This report summarizes themes that emerged from the meeting and describes the work done by the three state teams. Chapter 2 summarizes the major issues that were discussed at NGA's two-day meeting in May 1994. Chapter 3 describes the work done by Colorado, Michigan, and Rhode Island in thinking through new approaches to professional development. Finally, Chapter 4 proposes guiding principles for a new approach to in-service professional development and identifies topics for further discussion. This chapter stresses the need for policymakers to gain a thorough understanding of the nature and costs of effective professional development activities and practices in their states.

Professional Development as a Priority of Education Reform

Both the state grants project and the national meeting were intended to further the emerging debate on how to provide better professional development opportunities for educators. Many states are enacting new standards for curriculum, assessment, and student performance, and state and local policymakers must begin to make decisions about how they will ensure that teachers and administrators are prepared to carry out these reforms. Professional development needs to be fundamentally different than it is now. Instead of being fragmented and offered in one-time shots, it needs to be coherent and aligned to the emerging curricular and performance standards. Instead of being an add-on to the school day, professional development needs to be an integral part of an educator's career. Professional development for educators is essential to school improvement, increased student performance, and the success of systemic education reform. Holding high expectations for all students and implementing new or different instructional strategies and assessment techniques demand higher levels of skills and knowledge.

Yet many educators are not prepared to teach new curricula and adopt new instructional techniques. More teachers need to acquire the extensive knowledge base required by new standards—particularly in the areas of math and science—and to become familiar with alternative approaches to instruction and assessment. Current professional development opportunities typically do not provide teachers and administrators with the range of skills and grounding in content areas that will be necessary to achieve the National Education Goals. As states move toward a standards-driven approach to education reform, there is a clear need for coordinated professional development activities.

Educators must be given time, support, and opportunities to assess their own teaching methods, to develop and learn new subject matter, to work together as other professionals do to design and implement school improvement efforts, and to stay on top of the latest research in their fields—be it developmental research on the age groups they work with or substantive research in their subject areas. For each revision in curriculum, instruction, and assessment contemplated, state and local planners also must consider how they can help teachers and administrators carry out the change in the classroom. Professional development must not be an afterthought to the education reform process. It must be an integral part of state systemic reform plans. People who care about excellence in education must strive together to improve the professional capacity of the nation's teaching force. Indeed, it is difficult to see how other education reforms will succeed in the absence of an equally intensive effort to involve, support, and assist educators in their own educational development.

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2 Issues and Priorities

Saying that professional development must be changed is one thing. Actually replacing the current system with something more effective is another. Many difficult issues are involved. Participants in the NGA meeting on professional development May 9-10, 1994, in Washington, D.C., discussed many of these issues in depth. Attendees discussed problems, obstacles, and areas of frustration. They also worked to define what a new approach should look like.

What is considered good practice is in fact very archaic. It's the workshop mentality.

— A participant from Rhode Island

This chapter summarizes the major themes that emerged from the meeting. Like the meeting, it focuses on in-service professional development opportunities for educators currently working in schools and school systems. "Professional development" was defined as any of a broad range of activities intended to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers, administrators, and school staff.

Current Professional Development—"A Huge, Chaotic System That Has Not Improved Teaching"

What we have is a huge, chaotic system that has not improved teaching. Fallacy number one is that all professional development is good, we just need more of it.

— James Kelly, president, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

There was nearly unanimous agreement among meeting attendees that current approaches to professional development are not working. In particular, participants were critical of the "one-shot" workshop that typifies so much of current professional development. They noted that teachers generally feel that they gain little from such events. Packaged and standardized, these workshops—usually delivered by outside experts—do not address the unique problems and circumstances of individual schools or classrooms and are poorly linked to school, district, or state improvement plans. Fragmented and diffuse in content, they often cover topics that are only distantly related to the day-to-day challenges of teaching and learning. Tacked on to the regular school schedule once or twice a year, they fail to provide ongoing opportunities for discussion, growth, and reflection. With limited follow-through, they rarely have a lasting effect on school practice.

Meeting attendees also observed that there is a randomness about professional development activities. Disassociated from a well-defined, coherent set of priorities, current professional development activities sponsored by states, local school districts, or schools lack focus, depth, and an overall, unifying purpose. They do not lead to school improvement or even professional growth the way that investments in human resources are intended.

Backing up James Kelly's "chaotic system" statement is a survey by the Colorado Working Group for Professional Development that found that many districts "lacked a coherent or long-term strategy for ongoing career development," according to the group's report to the National Governors' Association. "Activities reported were not part of a larger plan and few teachers felt their career development opportunities were comprehensive or ongoing, particularly after the first year of teaching."

Meeting participants overwhelmingly felt that new approaches to professional development are needed.

The Challenge of Thinking Unconventionally

The challenge, of course, is to think of a better way. Although policymakers and educators attending the NGA meeting agreed that the current approach is flawed, they acknowledged that they are only beginning to conceptualize what they want instead. Those who have worked to design new systems were candid about the difficulty of breaking out of old patterns.

The institutional inertia that hinders thinking unconventionally about professional development seems to plague policymakers at all levels. Kay Logan, an education policy analyst for Colorado Governor Roy Romer, noted that when asked in a statewide survey about their vision for professional development, district superintendents said it should be ongoing and strategic; they also said that teachers should be engaged in the planning process. However, when asked specifically what they would do to align professional development with new education standards, the superintendents often reported activities that did not support this vision, including one-shot classes, conferences, or workshops with no follow-through.

Jane David, director of the Bay Area Research Group, noted that so far, ideas for change have not been very radical. "How far do you want to push it?" she asked. For example, on the issue of how much time schools should devote to professional development, she said, "The most radical suggestion you hear is to add five days to the school year, and there is everything wrong with that model of professional development. Yet that is as radical as we get when we talk about adding time to school schedules for professional development."

Attendees eventually concluded that the crux of the issue is not what forms professional development should take, but what the content or substance of professional development needs to be. Put another way, the real questions at this stage are not, "How many hours should be devoted to professional development? Should it consist of workshops, discussion groups, courses, or mentoring?" but, "What do educators need to learn in order to improve schools and implement standards-driven education reforms?"

Indeed, some participants noted that even the much-maligned workshop format works well in certain settings, provided that workshops cover relevant topics, allow for discussion among participants, adhere to the fundamental purpose of helping teachers do a better job of teaching students, have the necessary follow-through, and occur as part of an ongoing strategy to promote education reform.

Finally, there was consensus that a major priority is to break down the individual teacher's isolation within a school. This suggests that opportunities for networking with fellow teachers, professional colleagues, and administrators should be a priority.

The Issue of Time

If educators are to help students meet higher academic standards, many will need to enhance their own knowledge and skills. In addition to expanding their knowledge in basic subjects, they will have to reorient their teaching approaches to focus on helping students to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and communicate effectively. Take, for instance, mathematics instruction. If two primary objectives are to have students solve problems accurately *and* to estimate quickly and judge the quality of their answers, then teachers need to make these skills part of their instructional repertoires. Clearly, a significant amount of time will have to be invested in professional development to enable educators to master new content and instructional techniques.

How can schools find this time? Meeting participants said that this is one of the biggest obstacles they face in trying to improve professional development opportunities. As noted by Colorado policymakers, districts find themselves unable to pay for dramatically increasing the length of the school day and school year, even though they may need the time for training and professional development. The Colorado team called this constraint the "time/resource wall."

Time is a matter of redefining what teaching is, expanding what we see as legitimate work. This is key.

— Richard Behrman, managing director, Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucille Packard Foundation

Yet time for the professional development of both teachers and administrators is an issue that many citizens have trouble understanding. The perception among many is that educators do not work a full-year schedule and that when they are working the only thing that matters is "contact time" with students. Contact time is critically important, but the quality of that contact is largely dependent on educators' training and ongoing learning opportunities. As the standards-driven reform efforts around the country call for new ways to improve teaching and learning, the issue of contact time and what learning alternatives exist for students when their teachers are not present must be addressed.

One participant pointed out that though finding time for professional development is a problem for everyone, some states, school districts, and schools are using time more efficiently and more creatively than others. These places are experimenting with different staffing arrangements, such as team teaching or differential staffing, and with lengthening the school day and year. It was suggested that case studies be done to examine the best approaches to time utilization.

The Issue of Funding

Related to the time issue is the funding issue. Where will the funding for ongoing, high-quality professional development opportunities come from? Many of the ideas being discussed for improved professional development would involve the reallocation of current resources and/or the investment of potentially substantial new funds.

For example, in addition to suggesting that schools allot more time for professional development—a proposal that has budgetary implications in and of itself—some states have proposed that professional development schools and demonstration sites be created (e.g., see summaries of the Michigan and Rhode Island plans in Chapter 3). Recommendations that teachers and administrators have access to sophisticated telecommunications technology in order to promote networking and information sharing also imply large capital expenditures.

States and school districts already spend significant amounts annually on professional development activities. The problem with current cost estimates for professional development is that there are no common, precise definitions across states or districts of professional development activities from which actual cost comparisons and appropriate policy decisions can be made. For instance, in Chapter 3 of this report, Colorado provides several different scenarios of how professional development might be costed out in different districts in the same state. Michigan, on the other hand, combined all costs that could be classified as professional development to roughly estimate what the state currently spends on professional development.

Some meeting participants suggested that existing professional development funds be redirected toward activities that are more closely linked to the goals of school reform. However, even if this were done, it is likely that some states may have to secure additional funding for professional development endeavors. To make appropriate policy decisions in this regard, states must conduct a detailed analysis of the costs of current professional development programs and the anticipated costs of new or modified programs. There are tough budgetary choices implied in reforming professional development, such as reallocating current resources, modifying staffing patterns in schools and districts, changing salary schedule incentives, and/or rethinking class size configurations. As part of this analysis, states need to examine other sources of professional development, such as teacher preparation programs and continuing education at the college and university level. Issues such as these need to be examined before additional funding is infused into a new system for professional development.

Ultimately, both the matter of reallocating existing resources and that of obtaining increased funding are political concerns that hinge on having accurate data on current and future expenditures and on obtaining wide-

spread support from the public and lawmakers for high-quality, ongoing professional development programs.

The Need for Collaboration

Many sources of expertise are available to help administrators and teachers gain the new knowledge and skills they will need to help students stay in school and learn more. As many attempt to shift from a primarily regulatory/monitoring role to a facilitating/enabling role, an important job of state education agencies will be to encourage collaborations among all of the institutions engaged in helping youngsters learn and thrive.

For example, educators working in schools in poor and troubled communities stand to benefit greatly and learn from interagency collaborations that result in integrated services to children and families. Foundations and professional organizations concerned with science, technology, and mathematics can lend invaluable help to state education agencies and school districts working to enhance teachers' backgrounds and know-how in those areas.

Partnerships among institutions of higher education, state education agencies, and individual schools are also urgently needed to ensure that teacher preparation and research performed at universities is relevant to pressing questions about what works best in real classrooms and to ensure that the results are communicated to practitioners. "Practice is now ahead of the researchers," said one meeting participant, while others noted that universities are generally missing from the table when professional development is being discussed. Their input is needed.

As the Michigan Professional Development Working Group put it, strong links are needed between research and practice, between policy and practice, between initial and continuing education, between schools and their communities, between schools and the world of work, and between and among the many adults who share responsibility for students' and educators' learning. These are just a few of the kinds of collaborations that can lend immeasurable strength to reform efforts. State education agencies should make every effort to identify and cultivate these kinds of partnerships as they work to improve the quality of education in their states. It is important to note that the provisions in the Goals 2000 legislation supporting professional development promote these types of collaborations.

The Need to Bring Teachers and Administrators into the Reform Process

For education reform to be a success, the nation needs a force of motivated, highly skilled educators capable of teaching the content and skills called for in new state standards to take reform to the classroom and lead schools toward improved student achievement. For teachers, this means embracing the notion of high academic expectations for all students and carrying out new approaches to instruction with professionalism, energy, commitment, and know-how. For administrators, it means being able to set the direction in schools toward higher achievement and accepting accountability for actions and results.

Yet many educators today are not aware of the reforms being called for or the concepts behind them, a fact that was noted by several meeting attendees. A survey by the Colorado Working Group for Professional Development lent support to this impression, finding that more than half of the state's teachers felt unfamiliar with Colorado's major reform efforts and unprepared to implement them.

A concerted effort must be made to inform teachers about education reform measures so that they will understand the new demands of reform. As educators become more familiar with systemic education reform, they can then take the lead in making standards-driven reform possible and making professional development activities relevant to their work.

Indeed, some participants in the NGA meeting believed that teachers and principals are the best people to look to for new ideas about how to transform professional development. They know what works and what does not, and they have the best sense of what they need in order to do their jobs better. Certainly, they

We cannot tolerate the luxury of remaining aloof anymore. Universities play major roles in continuing education and professional development, but they are carrying on business as usual.

— Judith Lanier, Michigan Partnership for New Education, speaking as a representative of the higher education community

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It's amazing how little of what we are discussing is being discussed in schools. This is not being talked about in real schools with real kids.

— Peter Buttenweiser, consultant to The Pew Charitable Trusts

There needs to be a reconnect between policymakers planning the future course and people making dramatic decisions on a day-to-day basis in the schools.

— Peter Buttenweiser, consultant to The Pew Charitable Trusts

are among the most skeptical about current approaches, which many educators regard as a waste of precious time. Too many educators have had reforms imposed upon them and too few have had the support necessary to make these efforts effective.

Other attendees noted that some educators do not have the background or ability to say what their true needs are. If educators are uninformed about state and even local efforts at systemic education reform or they are unfamiliar with alternative ways of teaching and learning, then they cannot be expected to implement reforms—let alone drive the process.

The folks in the classroom want to be involved with serious professional development. But they ask, "How do we balance that with the need to spend the most time possible with students?"

— Colleen Bielecki, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers

In fact, there may be truth to both sides, depending on the individual teacher or administrator being talked about. The point on which all meeting participants seemed to agree was that there is a need to bring the philosophy and ideals of the National Education Goals to the school-building level. Everyone—including teachers, principals, district officials, parents, and the larger school community—must become involved in and committed to the concepts embodied in these goals.

To secure the involvement of educators in the professional development reform process, planners may first have to indicate how a new system of professional development will benefit them. Colleen Bielecki of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers pointed out that there is resistance and skepticism on the part of teachers when the "experts" start talking about the need to improve professional development. "Teachers see this as just the latest trend." Kay Logan reported that Colorado's survey of educators found that many teachers are fearful of having professional development "done to them." The survey also found that teachers want professional development activities to be directly relevant to what goes on in the classroom.

The Need to Build Public Support for Change

Teachers are not the only ones who think that professional development only serves to pull staff away from the more important job of teaching in the classroom. Education experts have been saying for the past several years that students do not spend enough time at school learning core academic content. The public values student contact time with teachers and does not see how professional development opportunities for educators improve teaching and learning, especially activities that have no student contact time or a minimal connection to classroom activities. If more professional development activities were relevant to an educator's daily work and were grounded in actual classroom practice, where teachers can learn from one another while working with students, a stronger link could develop between the professional development of educators and increased student learning. NGA meeting participants agreed that Governors have an important role to play in articulating the crucial connection between improving students' academic performance and strengthening the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators.

Another problem raised by meeting attendees is that many people currently think of professional development in the context of remedial training for teachers rather than as an integral part of the profession. The prevailing attitude is, "If we could just bring educators up to speed, everything would be okay." But attendees generally agreed that this perspective is misguided. A more constructive and accurate view is that new curriculum and performance standards for students will change the substance of teachers' daily work; educators therefore need a chance to master new material and approaches and make continuous professional development a part of their ongoing professional responsibilities. For all educators, professional development should mean more than learning about new ideas and teaching strategies. It means contributing to new knowledge and new approaches to teaching and learning.

Participants agreed that continued learning for educators should be thought of as it is for other professionals such as doctors, accountants, and lawyers. For example, in these professions, it is fully expected that practitioners

keep abreast of new information and changes in their field, not only through coursework, seminars, independent reading, and workshops, but also through networking, consultations, and informal discussions with colleagues.

The fact that doctors engage in these professional development activities does not imply that they are not "up to speed." Nor are doctors devalued if they spend a portion of their day away from patients studying a new finding in their field of specialty. Rather, these activities are regarded as a necessary and important part of being a professional in a specialized and changing field. Efforts by teachers to keep up with new information in their subject areas and new theories concerning how children learn should be regarded in the same way, as long as they are linked to and reflected in practice.

The Role of the State

Because the state plays a primary role in licensing and certifying/recertifying teachers and administrators and many states shoulder a significant portion of school funding, there are potential avenues for linking professional development reform to state responsibilities. New ideas concerning professional development imply a different role for state education agencies. Many people seeking more effective approaches are wary of state agencies creating yet another layer of bureaucracy, regulations, and red tape—an outcome that would only serve to increase existing cynicism and indifference on the part of teachers and principals about professional development activities.

Several meeting participants suggested that instead of mandating specific changes, state education agencies should provide ideas, encouragement, and assistance that will enable schools and districts to steer their own courses. (For an in-depth analysis of the challenges of capacity-building in state education agencies, see the NGA publication, *Transforming State Education Agencies to Support Education Reform.*) Teachers and administrators should be full partners in creating better, more meaningful professional development opportunities. "There must be top-down support for bottom-up change," said Ann Lieberman, co-director of the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching at Columbia University. The challenge facing reformers, said Peter Buttenweiser, is to "design policies that provide support without reenacting the top-down scenario."

Participants talked about the need for state administrators, who have long been accustomed to the command-and-control techniques of regulation and monitoring, to provide knowledge and skills useful for school-site practitioners and to adopt more flexible and collaborative approaches toward local school districts and schools. Ann Lieberman noted that states can support the establishment of regional and school networks not only with money, but with rhetoric. "States should think of sixty-nine ways to support people thinking about frameworks," she said. "What we don't want is a tight list of what counts as professional development," said another participant.

Several participants suggested that dramatic changes are necessary at the state level to improve teaching and learning. As one participant noted, if a goal of education reform is to create a community of learners within each school, "maybe the best way to achieve that is through zero bureaucracy, rather than through a multilayered apparatus involving federal, state, and local entities in highly rational approaches."

Among state policymakers eager to improve education, devising new ways to encourage effective professional development can be frustrating. Colorado's Kay Logan said that state officials are being pulled in two directions: on the one side, they are under increasing pressure to provide direction, while on the other they are being told to remain flexible. "A lot of dollars go right to the school-building level, but we don't have a policy framework in place to say how that money should be spent to help us meet state and local education reforms," she said. Logan's comments highlight the challenges of striking a balance between the needs of policymakers and those

of local educators and of creating policy that enables, rather than dictates, reforms at the school and district levels.

Toward New Visions of Professional Development

Participants in the NGA meeting identified several principles that should guide efforts to redesign professional development systems.

- First and foremost, professional development must be directed toward improving the performance of all students.
- Professional development should result in improved practice on the part of teachers and administrators and enhanced professionalism.
- Educators must be informed about and involved in the development of new standards and goals for educational practice. Furthermore, they must be able to see the connection between these goals and their own growth as professionals.
- School administrators and teachers need to be leaders and participants in the effort to plan for more effective professional development. They should not be merely the implementors of plans developed by others.
- Professional development opportunities should emphasize networking among teachers and administrators rather than instruction by outside experts. Professional development should allow time for reflecting on lessons learned, observing other teachers in action, and visiting with mentors and colleagues. The role technology can play in improving the professional development of educators should be considered as professional development is changed.
- Professional development approaches should be flexible. Different professional development activities should be designed at the school-building or district level according to district needs. They should be responsive to the unique and varied character of individual schools and communities, yet they should be linked to a state's or district's comprehensive reform agenda.
- A high-quality education system depends on continuous professional growth and development. Schools and school systems must create communities of learners, including both students and the adults who work in school systems.
- A common vision of what is needed must be shared by universities, departments of education, district officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, political officials, and communities at large.
- There must be an understanding and acceptance that improving professional development will require an investment of time. It also will require an in-depth examination of current professional development resources, of how dollars are spent, of which budget items might be reallocated, and of how much, if any, new money is needed.
- States should act as facilitators for change, establishing high-level academic standards for all children and providing the policy infrastructure to support school-level reform. States should provide flexibility for schools that have ideas, and professional development models for those that do not.
- Professional development should be an ongoing and integral part of school operations, not an add-on, piecemeal activity that occurs at the end of the day or solely on designated days.
- Ongoing professional development for educators must include opportunities for teachers and administrators to gain knowledge and experience for their work with children who have special needs. Educators need access to learning opportunities that address areas such as second-language acquisition, special learning needs or disabilities, and flexible learning environments for a diverse group of students.

3 Three State Models

With grant support from the National Governors' Association, working groups in Colorado, Michigan, and Rhode Island worked during the first half of 1994 to design new models for professional development in their states. Their plans shared certain characteristics. All strove to define the essential elements of an effective approach to professional development. All emphasized the need for specific professional development activities to be designed at the school level, with teacher input. All stressed that effective professional development must ensure career-long learning opportunities for practitioners. Although the state plans differed in the degree to which they would have state education agencies relinquish traditional regulatory and monitoring roles, all agreed that agencies should shift their focus toward facilitating, supporting, and providing technical assistance for local decisionmaking.

Definitions of Professional Development

[Professional development encompasses] all of the opportunities available to educators to improve their practice.

—Colorado Professional Development Working Group

Professional development [is] purposeful investment in the individual and collective competence of the adults responsible for young people's learning, including all adults who comprise each student's learning community.

—Michigan Professional Development Working Group

Professional development is a system of continuous growth and learning [that] builds the capacity of a school community to respond to the needs of all learners.

—Rhode Island Department of Education, draft definition

COLORADO

The chief goal of the Colorado plan is to ensure that professional development activities work directly and specifically to help educators implement the state's new content standards for grades K through 12. "Standards-driven education demands that teachers teach differently and that we view professional development differently. Raising expectations for students means raising expectations for educators," the Colorado Professional Development Working Group said in its report to NGA.

Colorado is developing content standards describing what students should know and be able to do in core academic subjects. In addition, the state is implementing a standards-driven system for educator licensure. In order to implement these and other education reforms in a coherent and linked manner, professional development opportunities for educators must be focused on and aligned with the state's education reform efforts. The professional development of educators is therefore the cornerstone of Colorado's efforts to improve schools and to increase student achievement.

The Colorado working group recognized that professional development needs to be fundamentally different than it is now. Instead of being fragmented, it needs to be coherent and planned. Instead of being an add-on to the educator's day, it needs to be an integral part of an educator's career. Professional development needs to do more that just "keep up" with current educational reform efforts; it is a primary factor that makes systemic education reform possible. Professional development is an integral part, not just an addition to, the implementation of Colorado's standards-driven academic system.

The working group sought detailed information about current professional development activities and broad input into the develop-

ment of a reform plan. The team conducted a survey to find out more about existing professional development activities in the state, developed draft criteria for effective professional development, conducted case studies of several existing local professional development programs as a basis for estimating costs for professional development in a state that emphasizes local control, and developed an action plan to guide further efforts to improve professional development.

Survey Provides a Snapshot of Current Scene

The Colorado team conducted a survey of superintendents, teachers, and staff developers across the state to gather information about the present state of professional development in Colorado and to solicit practitioners' views about the key elements of effective professional development. The findings were illuminating. The working group discovered that though almost all administrators were familiar with the requirements of the state's new educational standards law, nearly half of the teachers were only somewhat familiar or not at all familiar with the new requirements. The working group concluded that this gap in awareness and engagement must be closed for reforms to be successful. Furthermore, the report said, the working group believes that "a firm grounding in standards-driven education needs to be a strand extending from the beginning of a teacher's training through master licensure."

In another key finding, survey responses indicated that teachers currently perceive professional development as "a hoop to be jumped through" rather than an opportunity to help them implement reforms or help students achieve. Teachers indicated that they feel isolated, beleaguered, and "out of the loop." They also expressed a desire for professional development opportunities that are immediately relevant to their classrooms.

The survey also found that there is no single model for professional development activities. Professional development systems depend largely upon the size and needs of a school district. In many cases, professional development is decentralized within school districts, with decisions made at the school level. Survey responses indicated that professional development activities often take place in the absence of a coherent or long-term strategy for ongoing career development. Furthermore, there was little evidence of linkages among individual, school-site, district-level, and state-level professional development goals.

District time allotments for professional development ranged from 1.5 days to 10 days per year. The most frequently reported activities illustrate the lack of focus for professional development in schools. Districts reported curriculum and assessment planning, content area classes, workshops, conferences, school committee work, strategic planning, speakers, and parent meetings as professional development.

The survey also sought information on how resources are spent by districts on professional development and on how much might be needed to prepare teachers to implement education reforms. However, because of variability in districts' definitions of professional development and the lack of agreement about what kinds of professional development are needed to implement reforms, there was a great range in the districts' responses to both questions. This illustrates the difficulty inherent in state-level planning to support local-level professional development.

Criteria for Professional Development

Recognizing that its first task was to develop a clear vision about what constitutes effective professional development, the Colorado working group established draft criteria for effective professional development. Intended to help policymakers evaluate the quality of professional development activities, the draft criteria were developed with input from educators, administrators, professional development providers, policymakers, and parents. They include the following key points.

- Professional development should be comprehensive and planned with clear purposes, objectives, and goals.
- Professional development should be con-

tent-rich, focused, and aligned with standards-driven education as defined by state education reform legislation. Opportunities should prepare educators to use multiple forms of assessment, to implement content standards, and to meet the needs of diverse learners.

- Professional development models should fit Colorado's system of local control for education. Opportunities should link individual educator goals with school and district goals.
- Professional development should extend throughout an educator's career, including preservice, induction, and in-service opportunities.
- Effective professional development models should build the capacity of schools, districts, professionals, and the profession to implement standards-driven education.

Case Studies: The Varying Costs of Professional Development Statewide

To begin the process of determining costs associated with professional development in a state that takes local control seriously, the working group identified different district examples and then estimated the costs of the specific components of these programs. The working group recognized that a "one-size-fits-all" model for professional development cannot be expected to fit all communities, all educators, and all students in Colorado.

Accurate cost analysis of professional development is difficult because individual districts and schools define professional development differently. It is also difficult to track current spending on professional development through district budgets. Districts also have varying professional development needs because they differ in organization (i.e., centralized versus decentralized) and size. The Colorado case studies are intended to begin a cost analysis that is of maximum use to state and local policymakers by identifying the costs associated with specific kinds of professional development activities. The cases enabled the working group to demonstrate that a variety of models could fit local contexts and that a variety of approaches might satisfy the criteria identified for effective professional development practices.

Some highlights of the case studies follow.

- In a district with 22,500 students and 1,360 teachers, an extensive professional development program includes release days for professional development activities for teachers and ongoing follow-through training sessions with coaching by senior teachers. The cost of this program in its first year is $544,000 for four in-service days for district teachers; $120,000 for coaching at the district's forty schools; and $40,000 for the training of coaches (total: $518 per teacher). Although working group members felt that there might be more cost-effective approaches, they praised it for having clear goals and for providing ongoing support to teachers. The working group also liked the fact that the entire school staff is engaged in school improvement and that professional development is integrated into the work week as a part of the teachers' regular responsibilities.
- In a district with 800 teachers, officials are considering adding ten days to the school year to prepare teachers to implement standards. The cost would be $1.6 million per year, or $2,000 per teacher. Although the working group praised this approach for its goal of improving teacher preparation, the group saw it as far too expensive. In addition, it was criticized for failing to involve teachers in the regular professional development planning process and for its lack of follow-through activities to ensure sustained professional development. Furthermore, working group members believed that the plan would be strengthened by a clear connection to the state's new licensure process.
- In a district with 27,307 students and 1,700 teachers, existing professional development resources—including six professional development days annually and six hours of course work for recertification of teaching licenses—are being used to prepare teachers to implement standards-driven education

reforms. No additional costs are incurred in this approach because the district had made a substantial commitment to professional development, leveraged existing resources to pay for these activities, and made standards preparation the priority for all professional development activities. The working group praised this program for its financial commitment to professional development, for thinking creatively about reallocating resources, and for its explicit goal of preparing all district teachers to implement standards-driven education. It was criticized, however, for its failure to provide ongoing support to teachers in the form of coaches or mentors. Working group members also believed that the district needed to clearly link the plan to Colorado's new licensure system.

- In a district with 12,970 students and 713 teachers, students are released two hours early one day a week so that teachers can participate in professional development activities. Student contact time is made up by lengthening the remaining four days of the week by twenty-three minutes. During the two-hour professional development period, teachers may take part in departmental, school, district, or individual activities focused on meeting district goals for standards-driven education. The district also funds a mentoring program in which senior teachers mentor new teachers on an ongoing basis. The total cost of the program is $216,260 per year, or $303 per teacher. The working group praised this approach for being cost-effective, for being comprehensive and ongoing, and for making professional growth an integral part of the teachers' daily responsibilities. Working group members believed that the approach could be strengthened by linking professional development more explicitly to new licensure requirements and by providing coaches for all teachers.

- In a cooperative partnership, several small districts are pooling resources to provide teachers and administrators with an eight-day program that prepares them to teach according to the state's new standards. The program introduces the concept of standards-driven education and provides information about assessments, curriculum development, and communicating with the public. The final two days are devoted to teaching participants to become trainers. This approach was praised for providing services that might otherwise be cost-prohibitive to small districts. A potential weakness, however, is that the plan does not ensure follow-through support for teachers participating in the eight-day program.

State-Level Action Plan and Recommendations

A state-level action plan and timeline developed by the Colorado working group included the following milestones.

- By July 30, 1994, define the continuing role for the Professional Development Working Group, particularly with respect to how the working group can be integrated into Colorado's Goals 2000 and state standards-driven reform efforts.

- By July 30, 1994, familiarize teachers and the public with standards-driven education and the requirements of the state standards reform law. This goal was furthered by conducting hearings on draft content standards and disseminating a videotape and brochure on the new state law to every school in the state and to libraries.

- Prepare the staff of the Colorado Department of Education to support the implementation of standards, including new models of professional development.

- By September 15, 1994, convene groups to discuss strategies for professional development, using the case studies in the working group report as a starting point.

- By October 30, 1994, report to districts and practitioners across the state about criteria and strategies for effective professional development. The report, which will include the work of the Professional Development Working Group, will be designed to help educators, practitioners, school board members, and others begin delibera-

tions on strategies for implementing the state's standards reform law.

- Participate in ongoing discussions with representatives of teachers' associations and school districts to find out whether professional development might be enhanced through innovative approaches to contract negotiations and salary schedules.
- By January 1, 1995, work with the state Goals 2000 team, the Colorado Statewide Systemic Initiative, and other groups to seek funding for pilot models of professional development.
- By March 1995, make recommendations to the state Standards Council on statewide needs for funding of professional development and on model educator development materials and programs. This information will help the council formulate recommendations to the Colorado Board of Education and the Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education.

The action plan was accompanied by the following five recommendations to Colorado's Governor.

1. There should be two stages in the effort to reform professional development around standards: first, an awareness stage during which education professionals would learn about content standards and the implications of standards-driven education for professional development, and second, a reform stage during which professional development would undergo systemic reform to meet state and district-level objectives.
2. The strategies and action plan must build capacity at all levels of the system. Existing professional development resources must be reallocated and new funds must be spent strategically, including Goals 2000 funds, National Science Foundation Statewide Systemic Initiative funds, and additional state-allocated funds.
3. To accomplish education reform in the local control environment of Colorado, it is important not to dictate one model, but rather to have strategies in place that provide multiple models that can meet the statewide criteria and be adapted to local needs and contexts.
4. People involved in education reform need to rethink many of their assumptions about professional development activities for educators to ensure that opportunities are integrated into educators' regular responsibilities. The support and incentives for professional development should correspondingly be restructured to create an environment in which ongoing professional development is a priority.
5. The professional licensure process and standards-driven education should be aligned. The content standards for students will help focus professional development on what is important for teachers to know and be able to teach. The professional licensure process identifies what teachers must do to retain their licenses. These two processes must be linked so that teachers are relicensed based on their capacity for teaching according to the standards.

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Conclusion

The Colorado working group's action plan, with its March 1995 deadline for providing recommendations concerning funding and programs for professional development, should serve as an important catalyst for concrete action in Colorado. The state's recent reforms in the areas of content standards and licensure provide an additional incentive for policymakers to act on professional development if they want to ensure that all components of the state's education system work together in a mutually enhancing manner.

Nevertheless, reforming the state's diverse professional development programs will not be a simple task. Working group members identified several challenging questions that will have to be answered as they go about formulating their recommendations to the state Standards Council. Key among them are the following.

- Where will the time needed for professional development activities come from? Can existing time and resources be better used?
- Is more funding for professional development needed in order to successfully implement standards-driven education?
- What is the role of teachers' associations in supporting professional development?
- How can Colorado implement systems for professional development that meet the needs of individual teachers, that are adaptable to local contexts, and that still ensure statewide educational improvement?
- What do educators really need to know and be able to do to implement standards-driven education?

The answers to these complex questions will be valuable not only to policymakers in Colorado, but to education leaders across the nation.

MICHIGAN

Michigan's proposed action plan was crafted by a Professional Development Working Group assembled by the office of Governor John Engler, the Michigan Department of Education, and the Michigan Partnership for New Education. The Michigan group envisioned a system in which schools would make decisions regarding professional development and in which all the people who affect students' learning would be included.

A proposed infrastructure for professional development would feature rich networks to connect people working at all levels to support teacher education, sophisticated technological communications capabilities, demonstration sites, and a capacity for strong data gathering and analysis to ensure continual improvement in professional development programs.

A Burning Preoccupation with Learning

The Michigan plan for professional development grows out of a clear goal for the state's education system "that more ambitious learning goals must be met by young learners and their educators." The report says, "We Michiganians want our future generations to possess much greater powers of analysis and thought than we had the opportunity to learn when we were young. We want a new learning curriculum that encourages application, and performance of challenging, complex tasks—tasks which often require the use of advanced technologies—tasks which are frequently so complicated that they must be solved by teams of people, since no single person can do them alone."

The Michigan working group achieved broad consensus on the importance of learner-centered schools and communities. "The new learning goals of a society like ours—a society increasingly diverse in culture, language, and the individual needs of its young—require schools and communities that are highly focused on the growth and development of learners. Thus, the development of children and youth and their learning must be a burning preoccupation of all of the adults responsible for them," the Michigan report says.

Further, the working group agreed on guiding principles for educators working in these learner-centered schools. The principles include emphasizing student roles as active instead of passive and teacher roles as primarily guiding learning instead of delivering it; connecting the curriculum to students' culture and experience; and focusing on learners as "whole persons" who have physical and social-emotional needs that either interfere with or complement their intellectual development.

Finally, the working group reached fundamental agreement on the idea that learner-centered schools and communities necessary to achieve more ambitious learning goals "are not possible without new approaches to educators' work and professional development." The report adds, "The fact of the matter is that we will not get different, higher quality learning for all youngsters without first getting different, higher quality learning opportunities for all educators who guide them." It notes, "The old practices of confining teachers to classrooms all day with large numbers of youngsters, and then assembling them in the cafeteria for lectures on school improvement are gone."

Guiding Principles for Adults Working in Learner-Centered Schools and Communities in Michigan

- Put learners and learning at the center of [one's] work.
- Help all learners use their minds well and develop intellectual self-confidence.
- Help all students know, care, and act in the service of others, with a deep valuing of human diversity and democracy.
- Help all students master a number of essential skills and knowledge, especially in language and mathematics, ensuring that they understand what is learned.
- Personalize learning by connecting the curriculum to the students' culture, experience, and personal meanings, ensuring that each child is well-known and taught appropriately for his or her development.
- Emphasize student roles as active instead of passive and teacher roles as primarily guiding learning instead of delivering it.
- Maintain high but appropriate expectations for learners, coupled with continuing support and respect.
- Require student demonstration of rigorous intellectual performance through authentic assessment, while remaining dedicated to working with all students until they succeed.
- Focus on learners as whole persons who learn both in and out of school, attending to physical and social-emotional needs when necessary to ensure continuous progress and complement intellectual development.
- Work with teams of faculty, staff, and other adults who share responsibility for each learner's success, ensuring caring guidance, adequate time, and the technologies needed to achieve high standards.

An Inclusive View of Professional Development

The Michigan working group recognized that not just teachers, but all staff in a school, as well as family and community members, play an important role in young people's learning. Michigan's definition of professional development reflects this outlook. It reads, "Professional development [is] the purposeful investment in the individual and collective competence of the adults responsible for young people's learning—including all adults who comprise each student's learning community." Michigan working group members agreed, however, that the priority for professional development should be on teachers' learning.

Professional Development and Site-Based Decisionmaking

The Michigan team also agreed on the importance of site-based decisionmaking on professional development. The plan envisions educators at the local school level establishing priorities and plans for professional development in collaboration with parents/guardians and other community participants.

Principles for Quality Professional Development

The Michigan working group agreed to principles concerning quality professional development. The group agreed that, among other characteristics, high-quality professional development programs should:

- ensure all educators the opportunity to learn from accomplished professionals, while accommodating differences in educators' experience;
- provide sustained, meaningful opportunities for exchange among empowered, accomplished professionals and with other adults in the school and community;
- allocate sufficient time to engage in collegial consultation and learning that is freed from standard one-shot in-service training; and
- ensure access to technologies that are essential to effective professional work and learning.

The Need for an Infrastructure

The Michigan working group believed that an infrastructure for educators' learning must be created in order to provide sustained quality learning. "We were not coming to simply repair a broken part of our education system, so that we could be done with it and go home. Rather, we were figuring out ways to update an outmoded education system and replace it with a sound, self-sustaining infrastructure for self-development," the report says.

The unifying purpose of all of the components of this professional development infrastructure would be to maintain "one of the most advanced, caring, and successful educational workforces in the world," the report says. The working group identified five key components of the proposed infrastructure.

First, the infrastructure would include a set of sophisticated networks available to all educators: one to connect statewide professional development centers and sites working to develop, test, and demonstrate best practices; a second network to gather information and connect people with professional development needs with available professional development expertise; and a third network to connect local education practitioners and policymakers with state policymakers.

Second, it would feature a communications capability, through technology, that would promote close interaction among educators seeking information, knowledge, and suggestions. All educators would have easy access to computers and telecommunications, and schools would have easy access to video-conferencing capability.

Third, the infrastructure would include innovation/demonstration sites that would give educators access to the best current knowledge and know-how about teaching and learning in the core subjects, as well as the opportunity to see such knowledge applied in practice. The sites would include "subject -matter centers," where best tools and practices for teaching core subjects would be developed, tested, and demonstrated. They would also include "pro-

Principles for High-Quality Professional Development in Michigan

- Accommodate differences in development, thus affording different support for novices than for experienced educators, but ensuring all educators the opportunity to learn from accomplished professionals.
- Provide sustained, meaningful opportunities for exchange among empowered, accomplished professionals and their adult counterparts in the school and community.
- Focus on all conditions and events that affect students' learning, and thus develop the knowledge and skills needed to build broad-based coalitions that sustain healthy and effective schools.
- Support ongoing learning for educators in a school culture that changes traditional roles and relationships among educators—one that promotes diversity, teamwork, and collaboration.
- Allocate sufficient time to engage in collegial consultation and learning that is basically freed from the standard one-shot in-service training.
- Ensure access to technologies and other modern resources that are essential to effective professional work and learning in the twenty-first century.
- Include opportunity for educators to construct curriculum and assessments inclusive of and sensitive to all forms of student diversity.
- Place classroom practice in the larger context of the school and community life of youngsters, developing policies and practices that promote parents and others as partners in students' learning.
- Construct professional development plans and priorities in local schools, with opportunities provided for informed dissent.
- Ensure balance and complementarity between the learning interests of individual faculty members and the learning needs of the school faculty at large [which] must respond to the learning needs of the students.

fessional development sites," where various educational standards (e.g., those concerning curriculum, assessment, learning outcomes, and the professional abilities of educators) would be integrated and coordinated.

The infrastructure also would include a set of learner-centered schools and communities staffed by accomplished school and university faculty to prepare and screen future educators during their internship experience. This component would ensure that educators entering the workforce have been prepared in best practice and assessed for their competence to perform quality professional work.

Finally, the infrastructure would possess a data-gathering and analysis capacity to provide accurate information about learners and learning in the state and to aid in the continuous assessment of the value and costs of various programs.

Professional Development and Related Education Policy

The Michigan team considered how the proposed new professional development infrastructure would fit with related educational policies, such as school accreditation, teacher licensure and certification, and postsecondary education policies.

The working group agreed that school accreditation should be related to a school's professional development outcomes. Members also generally agreed that the professional development needs of schools in danger of being unaccredited should be a priority for state investments.

On the issue of licensure and certification, the group agreed that individuals preparing to become teachers or administrators should have high-quality internships in professional development schools designed for this purpose. The group is still considering whether professional development funds should be targeted to those seeking or getting certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Finally, the working group noted that there is a need for greater collaboration between the K through 12 and collegiate sectors. Further study is needed on the possibilities for simultaneous, continuous renewal of education at all levels, the Michigan report said.

Current Estimated Annual Investments in Professional Development

The working group estimated the state's gross expenditures on professional development by combining all costs that could be classified as professional development. Their rough estimate includes funds from federal programs; direct and indirect state costs through current legislation, the state department of education, and the public universities training teachers and administrators; and expenditures at the local intermediate districts and local school-system level. Michigan's rough estimate of more than $500 million spent in the state for professional development points to areas where further issues must be investigated to determine the actual current investment in professional development.

To determine a state's investment in professional development, professional development must be defined so that accurate financial data can be gathered. Several questions must then be asked to determine the validity of Michigan's estimate and to consider possible reallocation and/or increased investments. These questions include the following: What are the actual costs for the in-service and ongoing training of educators in the field? How are dollars actually deployed? How could funds be redeployed? What policy changes are necessary to ensure that the investment in professional development is effective in terms of student achievement patterns? Until these questions are answered, it would be extremely difficult to make sound policy decisions on professional development based on Michigan's current cost estimates.

The Michigan report noted that these estimates, deemed conservative by the working group, seem "to call into question the widely shared belief that current investments are lacking in professional development." Rather than suggesting that these large expenditures are necessarily indicative of a healthy professional

development system, the report asked whether current investments "are not now so scattered that they fail to add up to anything substantial."

Conclusion

The question of whether additional funds will have to be appropriated for professional development or whether existing professional development dollars simply need to be reallocated is one that will require further study, not only in Michigan but in all states contemplating reforms. Before any conclusions can be drawn, Michigan policymakers will have to conduct more detailed analysis to pin down the precise amount currently being spent on professional development and to determine whether and how these funds might be redeployed; they will also have to define exactly what is meant by professional development for these purposes.

Only after Michigan decisionmakers have a thorough understanding of the financial component of reform can they begin the hard work of implementing the working group's vision of a comprehensive professional development infrastructure that will serve educators' needs throughout their careers.

RHODE ISLAND

The strategic plan submitted by the Rhode Island Department of Education contains many of the features urged by those who attended NGA's May 9-10 meeting. The plan emphasizes continuous learning for educators, as opposed to one-shot workshops and seminars. It is an integral part of the state's overall reform effort. It envisions school-based planning of professional development. The state would support local planning and implementation through a combination of "soft" approaches, such as facilitation and information dissemination, and "hard" techniques, such as regulations and accountability measures.

One part of the plan that is particularly important to Rhode Island planners is the need to build the knowledge base not only of teachers and administrators, but also of the many other people who affect students' learning, including support staff, families, and others in school communities.

In addition, Rhode Island planners submitted a draft action plan for redesigning educator preparation, certification, and professional development. The plan includes more than a dozen objectives and a timeline for implementing each.

The Rhode Island plan does not discuss what the specific content of new professional development activities would be, beyond saying that the activities would be focused on achieving school goals and linked to standards for student learning.

An Integral Part of Reform

Viewing professional development as a critical component of its overall education reform effort, the Rhode Island Department of Education has made the creation a statewide system of professional development one of five explicit priorities guiding its work. The other priorities include developing learner goals and performance assessments; designing and implementing a school improvement support system; developing and supporting integrated social services; and restructuring state financing of education.

Work on the professional development component is being carried out by the Professional Development and Certification Policy Consortium, composed of the commissioner and deputy commissioner of elementary/secondary education, a policy adviser from the Governor's office, the deans of education from the state's two institutions of higher education, teacher union leaders, and leaders from the state superintendents' and principals' associations. One of the goals of the consortium is to design "a cohesive and comprehensive system for professional development which fosters career-long growth and development and broad participation."

In addition, a Professional Development Committee composed of people within the Rhode Island Department of Education is working to draft guidelines and criteria for effective professional development and to coordinate professional development activities conducted or sponsored by the department. The work of this committee will be reviewed

and approved by the Professional Development and Certification Policy Consortium.

Five-Year Action Plan

The policy consortium has written a draft five-year plan of action for redesigning educator preparation, certification, and professional development. Key features related to professional development include:

- the establishment of professional standards and assessments for teachers and administrators;
- the development of a framework for comprehensive statewide professional development programs that would set criteria for effective planning and implementation, identify models of good practice, create minimum expectations for planning, and develop interschool and interdistrict support networks;
- a call for annual school-based strategic planning for professional development, possibly assisted by state guidelines and technical assistance;
- the establishment of long-term collaborations between institutions of higher education and schools; and
- the establishment of links between professional development and certification.

Models of Delivery

Rhode Island planners believe that professional development activities should take a variety of forms, which could be matched to the particular needs of schools and individuals. Examples include:

- interactive workshops and seminars planned as a series on a single topic;
- coaching and mentoring aimed at improving a teacher's practice through a one-to-one relationship with another educator;
- study groups in which a group would meet regularly to discuss books and articles;
- action research, in which individuals or small groups would take a year to conduct research on an important topic and report their findings back to the school community;
- professional development schools created jointly by universities and school districts and focused on giving preservice educators opportunities to learn in school settings;
- telecommunications-related opportunities, such as watching instructional videotapes, participating in interactive teleconferences, and sharing information through a computer network; and
- graduate course work and degree programs focused on school teaching and learning.

The Role of the State

Under the Rhode Island plan, the state would promote effective professional development by identifying budget resources; establishing policies, regulations, and guidelines for planning and implementation; reviewing and disseminating research about good practice; developing accountability measures focused on student achievement of statewide standards; promoting collaborations between institutions of higher education and schools; and facilitating connections among preparation, certification, and professional development processes.

The state also would seek to provide support to districts, schools, and individuals by providing guidance in allocating funds to schools and encouraging efficient management of resources through interschool or interdistrict collaborations.

Anticipated Results

Rhode Island planners anticipate that their professional development efforts will lead to the following results over the next five years:

- school-based strategic planning of professional development linked to school improvement;
- a common understanding of good practice and effective models in professional development;
- the establishment of professional development schools;
- mentoring programs for beginning and experienced teachers;

- involvement on the part of all educators in ongoing professional development; and
- coordinated professional development planning by the education department.

Conclusion

The Rhode Island professional development strategy is notable for its clear objectives and its orderly planning and decisionmaking processes. The working group also gave valuable thought to the role of the state department of education in creating and sustaining a new system of professional development. Although the Rhode Island plan appears to place more emphasis on state regulatory and monitoring powers than the Michigan or Colorado plans, nevertheless it seeks to strike a balance between local and state control over the professional development process. By calling on schools to do annual strategic planning for professional development, the Rhode Island team clearly envisions a system that acknowledges and incorporates individual school priorities, needs, and approaches.

Like all states considering improvements in professional development programs, Rhode Island planners will need to conduct a detailed analysis of how reforms will be financed before moving into the implementation stage.

Conclusion

Policymakers and planners do not have the luxury of putting the issue of professional development aside until they are less busy with other things. State reform efforts in areas such as curriculum, assessment, and teacher certification are moving fast, and professional development reforms are an integral part of such reforms. Many believe that without an intensive effort to help teachers and administrators meet new demands, the whole reform effort could be stalled.

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Already, the beginnings of a vision for a new system are emerging. Guiding principles of a new approach follow.

- Professional development must be ongoing.
- All activities must have the paramount goal of improving student learning.
- Professional development programs must be tied to new standards for curriculum, assessment, and student performance.
- Professional development activities must be directly related to what goes on in the classroom and grounded in the work of teachers and administrators.
- New approaches to professional development must foster the sharing of ideas among educators and networking among all people and institutions involved in educating and caring for students.
- Professional development opportunities must be an integral part of school schedules.
- Professional development programs must be designed at the school and district level, with support from state education agencies.
- The actual costs of current professional development activities must be determined so that sound decisions can be made about increasing professional development budgets and/or reallocating budget items.

Many issues remain to be solved. Focused discussion and analysis are needed on the following points.

- What are the costs of current professional development activities? It is extremely helpful to be able to put a dollar amount on what states and districts are currently spending on professional development activities, even if it is only a rough estimate. Policymakers need a clearer understanding of the kinds of professional development activities already occurring in their states and of the strengths and weaknesses of those programs. Only then can they make informed judgments about how the system needs to be changed. The questions in the preceding chapter can help states create an accurate picture of what exists now.
- What is the desired content of professional development activities? To date, discussion has focused disproportionately on the secondary issue of modes of delivery.
- How can appropriate funding levels be determined for professional development efforts?
- How can public awareness be built about the value of strong, focused professional development opportunities?
- What forms of support can state education agencies provide?

- How can school schedules be rearranged to accommodate ongoing, school-based professional development?
- To what extent should priorities for professional development be related to the credentialing of educators and/or the accreditation status of a school?
- How can reforms in professional development be moved beyond isolated examples of innovation? "We need more than pockets of excellence," said an NGA meeting attendee. The entire infrastructure must be rethought, with strategies to bring professional development up to scale so that all educators have access to new models of professional development.
- How can a *system* of professional development—preservice and in-service training, recruitment and retention, board certification, and ongoing training—be developed and sustained? In this regard, states need to consider the role that institutions of higher education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards play in the development of educators.

State and local policymakers must take the time to consider these issues in order for professional development to improve.

Appendix

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New Models for Professional Development for Educators: Creating State Action Plans

May 9-10, 1994, Washington, D.C.

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